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RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 0478
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 0821
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0270

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAKU 000146

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DEPT FOR EUR/CARC

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/15/2018

TAGS: PREL PBTS GG RU YI AJ

SUBJECT: DEMARCHE DELIVERED: AZERBAIJANI REACTION TO
POSSIBLE RUSSIAN RECOGNITION OF KOSOVO

REF: A. STATE 14840

¶B. BAKU 129

Classified By: Pol/Econ Chief Joan Polaschik per 1.4 (b,d).

¶11. (C) DCM delivered ref a points regarding possible Russian recognition of Abkhazia in a February 15 meeting with Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Khalaf Khalafov. Noting that Georgia is a neighbor with whom the GOAJ maintains close cooperation on a number of areas of mutual, strategic interest, Khalafov said Azerbaijan does not intend to recognize Abkhazia.

¶12. (C) Khalafov asked why the United States was not making a similar demarche urging states not to recognize the so-called "Nagorno Karabakh Republic." He noted that Foreign Minister Mammadyarov had requested that the U.S. issue a statement indicating that Kosovo's independence will not be considered a precedent for unresolved conflicts in the Caucasus and Moldova (ref b). Azerbaijan is a friend and partner of the United States, Khalafov continued, and is working closely with the U.S. to advance our shared interests. A strong U.S. statement indicating that Kosovo will not set a precedent for the Nagorno Karabakh conflict is extremely important for Azerbaijan's national interests. He added that the EU, OSCE and UN all must state clearly that Kosovo is not a precedent for Nagorno Karabakh, "otherwise there could be negative repercussions for the peace process." The DCM responded that U.S. policy clearly states that we do not consider Kosovo's independence as a precedent for other conflicts. Moreover, our policy regarding the so-called "Nagorno Karabakh Republic" is clear: we do not recognize that entity. Pol/Econ Chief noted that the Embassy had conveyed Mammadyarov's request to Washington.

¶13. (C) Comment: Based on our discussions with Mammadyarov and Khalafov, it is clear the GOAJ is considering a strong response to Kosovo's independence. The GOAJ is deeply worried that Kosovo's independence will set off a chain reaction that could affect Nagorno Karabakh's international status and disrupt the OSCE Minsk Group peace process. For this reason, the GOAJ is unlikely to recognize Kosovo's independence and also is unlikely to recognize Abkhazia. We will continue to underscore in our public and private comments that Kosovo will not set a precedent for other conflicts. We urge the Department to consider issuing a public statement that makes this point.

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